

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Fall Issue #127

Greensburg, Indiana

October 1991

OCCASION: Fall Meeting

PLACE: Decatur County REMC
Building.

DATE: Oct. 24, 1991
7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: The program will be a slide narration by Joe Westhafer, entitled "America's First Interstate-The Ohio River". This presentation will cover navigation of the river, including locks and dams, history, and westward settlement with special attention to the area from Cincinnati to Louisville. This sounds like a real interesting affair, see you there.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Perry & Vivian Adams
Kathryn & Leonard Manship, Osgood.

Thought "Agaphone" Doomed Telephone

A St. Omer man, Israel D. Jewett, invented an instrument in 1878 to which he gave the name "agaphone."

Papers of that year refer to it in glowing terms and predicted that it would supplant the telephone in a short time.

One paper reported that "A reporter of the Cincinnati Gazette, who has twice visited St. Omer to inspect this invention reports it a perfect triumph over the Edison instrument."

Historians are unable to find any mention of it after that year.

Whether it was ever used as a means of communication has never been discovered but it seems certain that it was never manufactured for commercial purposes.

It was in reality nothing but a

telephone, according to historians writing at the turn of the century.

SUMMER MEETING was held in the Westport Covered Bridge August 4, at 2:00 P.M. with about 65 members present. They were well entertained by Dan Goris, a Civil War buff from Versailles. He displayed a fine assortment of Civil War artifacts which he has collected. Along with these he gave a very informative talk about various aspects of his hobby. It was just a real good program, given in a very pleasant setting. After the program, the group adjourned to the Conwell home in Westport for a big helping of home made ice cream with punch and home made cookies. We all want to thank the Conwells for every thing especially their hospitality. Quite a MEETING.

A BIG THANKS to the following folks who gave programs at the Museum during the summer months:

Emily Shireman - Dolls
Mary Beth Herbert - Spinning
Red Hawkins - Wood working
Leon Snodgrass - Photography
Lois Laskowski - Herb garden

Also, thanks to Jackie Mendenhall and Maxine Clemons for organizing these programs, and Jane Herbert who made the kitchen curtains.

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Excerpts from a recent Phil S. Deiwert letter.

Please ask Dale Myers if he can send me anything about the 1916 Centennial Celebration. One of the school teachers, Miss Snively was drilling us for an exhibition out in Von Pool's Woods. I was to be a bluejay. My mother made my costume. Just over the west fence full halves of oxen were being roasted over a pit. They smelled wonderful. My

mother would not let me go over and beg a taste. The pagent was about to start when a regular cloudburst washed everything out. We never did put on the pagent and I never got any roast beef. Just went home soaking wet. The men of the county were building a log cabin where the Jr. High school gym is. The door and door and window jams were yellow poplar puncheon finished on both sides with an adz. A white oak log about four feet in diameter was cut into proper lengths and split into shakes.

The cabin was never finished. The World War in 1917 took everybody's time. Finally it was torn down because tramps were living in it.

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HISTORY OF LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH

The Liberty Baptist Church of Decatur County, Indiana was organized at the home of Charles Taylor, three and one half miles west of Greensburg, August 11, 1827. This was the third Baptist Church in Decatur County.

The first church building was a log structure 26 by 22 feet and was located one mile north of the present site, however this building was never completed. The second building was started in 1844, also a log structure and was 24 by 40 feet and completed in 1852. This building was located one mile south and one mile east of the present church. In 1855, the church moved one-half mile east of the present church and was a frame structure 30 by 36 feet. At the close of a revival meeting in 1866, the church burned to the ground.

The same year the present building was started, made of brick and was 40 by 50 feet and was completed in 1868, on one acre of land at the cross roads 400 west and 300 south.

The church was divided with a partition with the women on the south side and the men on the north and each had a door to enter and leave. The purpose of this is when they had feet washing, the women would wash each other's feet and the men would wash each other's feet and with more privacy with the partition down the middle.

The Amen corner was in the back, around the stove where the men would shout "Amen", "Praise the Lord" or "Hallelujah", as the Spirit would lead them.

Up front was the mourners bench where the sinner could go to mourn their sinful ways, and to receive words of encouragement and prayers of the faithful.

A term you don't hear anymore is Churching or Church-em. It is used to describe disciplinary practices in which church members are expelled for behavior unbecoming a christian. I can remember older members telling me about one member who had a team of mules that wouldn't move and he beat them with a stick and cursed them. They had a trial and put him out of the church. Other reasons

might be drunkenness, fornication, idolatry, way of dress, cutting of hair, or breaking any of the ten commandments.

The Sunday School was organized in 1850, but met only in the summer months due to the mud roads. For many years, they had only the Bible and a few small testaments to study from. Someone would read their lesson for the morning and would have thirty minutes of Bible study.

The Woman Missionary Circle was organized in the 1880's for study and support of mission activities, home and foreign. It served as a basic source of mission education in the church.

The Baptist Young People's Union was organized in 1921 as a service and study for the young people that taught scripture, doctrine, morality, and community responsibility.

Revival services are held for the purpose of renewing the zeal of church members and converting non-christians to the faith. Services usually last two or three weeks or when the religious enthusiasm wanes. After such a meeting in the third Saturday in December of 1877, the church met on the banks of Sandcreek about a mile east of Horace, near the foot bridge on Brother Robbins farm and near Brother John Parker's sawmill to attend the ordinance of Baptism. There were 29 converts baptized. The ice had to be broken before the baptizing.

In 1906 the church was completely remodeled and in August of that year the church was rededicated. A bell tower and a new entrance was made and the partition was removed allowing men and women to sit together.

The bell you can hear over the country side was given to the church in 1906 by Ralph Mc Gee in memory of his wife Sarah. He wanted all of his nine children to be able to hear it ring. The first bell didn't ring loud enough so they took it down and put one up that would.

A need was seen for more class rooms, so a social room and a kitchen used for class rooms were built in 1935. A coal furnace and a light plant that generated its own electricity were also added in 1935.

In 1964 the last addition was made to the church, 10 by 40 feet for restrooms and more class rooms.

I have seen many changes in the church and in the way we worship. Sometimes I think the old way was the best and at other times I like the way we worship now. But I wouldn't like the inconveniences of long ago. Coal oil lamps, traveling by horse and buggy on mud roads, or a cold winters day all would wear overcoats during the services.

One of our biggest changes is our attendance. We use to have over 125 every Sunday, now we have less than 25. We could use one of those old time revivals. But God's work will always continue and once again the church is on the increase and will be serving the spirital needs and continue as a Guiding Light for this community.

John E. Parker 1990

"HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER"

by: Smiley Fowler

The two years -- 1851-1852 -- when the Eggleston family resided in Decatur County, were productive of literature that entertained millions of readers and did much to advance interest and an understanding of the Middlewest.

Contrary to current criticism of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" when it became a literary sensation in the early 'seventies (that it exaggerated the crudities of Indiana pioneer life) the story really brought about such reformations in the American midwest as Dicken's "Nicholas Nickleby" had achieved in England's boarding school system.

The Eggleston brother, Edward and George Cary, were born at Vevay. Their father, a young lawyer, died in 1848. Relatives of the widow, living in Decatur County, urged her to come here so that they could assist her in rearing her four children. She accepted that invitation and was surrounded by the Barger, Welsh, Craig, Lowry and other well-to-do Clay township families. Here she met and married the Rev. Williamson Terrell, a Methodist circuit-rider.

The family settled in Milford (Clifty postoffice), occupying a house on the north side of the mainstreet with a stone wall in front. Improved at various times, the house is well preserved to this day.

Fond of Stepfather

When they came to Milford, Edward, a red-haired, rather frail boy, was 14 and George was a husky youngster of 12. Edward was inclined toward religion, and George was impressed by the intellectual agnosticism current in that period. Both were avid readers, and the smattering of education imparted to them in the village school was supplemented by their mother, a cultured woman of 38. They were taught also by their stepfather, of whom they grew to be quite fond.

Their mother's cousin, Merit C. Welsh, lately returned from army service on the Mexican border, kept a grocery store and tavern and served as a constable in the justice of peace court of A.H. Underwood.

(Ten years after this eventful year of 1851, Welsh was an active fugure in his second war and was promoted to a colonelcy. After the war he moved to Greensburg and lived on North Broadway for many years. He is well known by all elder residents.)

In that mid-century interval Welsh was concerned in the stirring events which formed the plot of The Hoosier Schoolmaster.

The home of Caleb Stark on the Vandalia road, two miles northeast of Milford--the farm now occupied by Leonard Stagge--was robbed, and another robbery occurred the next night at the home of John Dronberger near the village of Old St. Louis 12 miles northwest of Milford.

Dr. Henry Smalley was arrested on suspicion, and after a brief hearing in the Milford court his case was sent to the JP court of Samuel Bryan in Greensburg. Smalley was released on bail provided by his father.

Greenwood Harrison, a young medical student in Smalley's office, was also arrested, and he turned state's evidence, fixing the crimes on Smalley.

Case Dismissed

Stark and Dronberger provided bond for Harrison to secure his evidence against Smalley. But Harrison jumped bail and disappeared. By a slick move the Smalley's appeared in Bryan's court and demanded immediate trial. The case had to be dismissed.

However, public sentiment against the doctor was so strong that Merit Welsh was sent to his home near Old St. Louis to search for evidence. There, without a search warrant, he broke open a trunk and found what he considered good evidence.

Welsh was prosecuted in a Bartholomew county court on a charge of illegal search, and the evidence thus obtained was not allowed in prosecution of Smalley. Welsh was found guilty and fined one cent.

Harrison's forfeited bail bond was never collected from the robbery victims.

These events kept the Milford community in a state of agitation during the Eggleston family's residence there and left a deep impression on Edward's mind.

School Teachers

The stepfather was transferred in the fall of 1852 to a Methodist church at New Albany, later to Madison and to Vevay.

Edward and George became school teachers, and their joint experiences contributed to the complex plot of Edward's famous novel, which was published in 1871. Many of the real names of Decatur County persons were carried in the story, some with slight changes. Smalley, for example, was Dr. Small in the story. Some names and plot incidents were composites of later remembered Vevay experiences.

Mrs. Eggleston's Craig relatives in Virginia were persons of wealth, and George, while on a visit there, was induced to stay and pursue his education in the state university. At the outbreak of the Civil War he enlisted in the medical division on the Confederate side. After the war he joined Edward in New York City, and both became famous journalists, historians and novelists. Edward was credited with promoting the present international copyright system.

Milford and Greensburg are central points in George's "Jack Shelby" novel, published in 1906, and in which I gave some collaboration. Edward's "Hoosier Schoolboy" also embraced some Decatur County experiences.

MORE STAR BARN

The horse sales, I believe they were held in the late 1940's, were, to me, the outstanding event put on at the barn. Horses of all kinds and people of all kinds came from every where it seemed, even from Texas. You practically had to know some one to get a place to stand. The sale started about noon, and often, was still going the next morning. For some it became quite a social event with a lot of various beverages being consumed. Several buyers were rather surprised to see what they had purchased the night before.

Those horse sales were special, being held in conjunction with the weekly sales. The regular livestock sales every Thursday, or was it Wednesday, were well attended. The streets around were parked solid. A goodly number came just as observers, and to visit with other non-participants. Seats on the built in bleachers were hard to come by. The "For Sale" animals were driven from the ground floor up a series of ramps to the sale ring, then back down after being sold. This movement of animals caused much bellowing and shouting sometimes drowning out the auctioneer. Along with this movement, there was a continuous stream of maybe buyers going up and down the stairs, looking in the many pens to see what the prospects might be. It was quite a problem in logistics to keep this traffic flowing smoothly.

All types of livestock were sold, some real good, others not the best. I remember my grandfather buying a one eyed mare for \$40. She was mostly Morgan, turned out to be the best riding horse we ever had. You had to be a good judge of livestock along with a little luck to make a good buy.

Those I remembered who kept things moving in the sale ring were Kelly Smith, Bill Crister, and Charlie Young. Along with the auctioneers, they often offered numerous humorous remarks concerning the livestock, buyer, seller, etc. There was quite a little showmanship in all of these gentleman. The weekly auction sale was usually "the best show in town". Years ago a western friend of mine came to visit. I wasn't home the first day. To entertain him, my grandfather took him to the sale at the Star Barn. He never got over what an interesting and entertaining event this turned out to be. Auction sales are always entertaining. In its hey-day the Star Barn Sale was one of the best.

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FROM THE GREENSBURG STANDARD

In a late Standard "O.T." gives some reminiscences of "Dod" Alley. I happen to be old enough to remember something about him. There is no question about his being the most eccentric representative ever sent from this county to the legislature. The two bills O.T. reports that he tried to have enacted demonstrate that fact.

He stuttered, was illiterate and lacked much of being an Apollo Belyidere in face and form, and must have been the laughing

stock of the House.

The first time he was elected must have been for the fun of it. To elect him twice was carrying the joke too far.

Whatever else may be said of him, he was a successful bush-wack campaigner in that early day. He did not stuff his pockets with platforms and documents like the modern would be statesman does, but he did load them with flasks, with the contents of which he was very generous to voters.

Whiskey did not pay a third of the U.S. revenue then, and was worth only about 15 cents a gallon, and a barrel worth \$5.00 would wet a fine lot of dry throats.

Isaiah Kemble, his opponent (for the legislature the first term), was born, raised and educated in New Jersey. He came of Quaker stock, that accounted in part for his anti-slavery and anti-whiskey prejudices. He wouldn't treat. It was not from parsimony but principle.

There was a militia muster, and he would not treat, getting a heavy public cursing from his neighbor, Nathan Swails, for such anti-candidatorial refusal.

Well, he was beaten at the polls and Mr. Alley was triumphantly elected. I was then too young to know this, but it is a family tradition and is substantially true. Years after this, in Greensburg, from a country wagon, I heard Mr. Alley make an Alley speech. I don't remember what his hobby was, but I think he wanted to go again to the legislature "in the in-trust of the p-p-people." He was willing like 500,000 patriots of today to be immolated on the alter of our country. To show his countrymen his patriotism and generosity, and incidentally to make a few votes, he made a 4th of July barbecue, to which he invited everybody, irrespective of party, to come and eat his bread and roast beef. Several hundred went and tried to masticate his beef which unfortunately was about half raw; and on the 1st Monday in August voted for the other fellow--the ingrates--one of which I was.

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Summer Issue #126

Greensburg, Indiana

August 1991

OCCASION: Summer Meeting

PLACE: Westport Covered Bridge,
located on Sand Creek 1½
miles east of Westport
on County Road 1100S.

DATE: August 4, 1991, 2:00 PM

PROGRAM: Dan Goris, a resident of
Versailles, will give a talk on the
Civil War. Mr. Goris is a State
Trooper and a Civil War buff. After
the program, refreshment in the
form of Homemade Ice Cream will be
served on the lawn of the Bob Conwells
on east Main Street in Westport.
This sounds like a meeting that you
just can't miss. See you there.

Bring sit upons.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Terrence a Hillman
Dennis Fogle
Edith Hart
Tom Barker
Mr. & Mrs. William Ernstes
Madeline Thurston

LIFE MEMBERS:

Hannah Brown
Barbara Westhafer

GIFT TO SOCIETY:

Tri Kappa Sorority

MEMORIAL

In memory of her father, Loren Marlowe,
given by Martha L. Kuchler.

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NOTE: If there is a RED STAR on your
address label, your dues for 1991
have not been paid. PLEASE remit at
your earliest convenience.

#####

Spring Meeting was attended by
about 65 members and guests at
the Decatur County court room
in the local courthouse. They
were well entertained by the
showing of the old film pretain-
ing to the celebration of the
centennial of Greensburg in 1959.
This film was done by a, then
quite young, Fred Craig. He
now lives in Scotland, and is
quite successful in animated
movies. Pat Smith was in
charge if the program. There
may be an attempt to put this
film on video tape. If you
might be interested in a copy,
Pat is the one to see. Readawn
Mets conducted the meeting,
Judge Westhafer was the genial
host.

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Fair Booth - There will be
none this year. All the booths
were sold out to former renters,
a good idea though.

Dues: If your bulletin has a
red mark below the address, it
is because you have, as yet,
not paid your dues for 1991.
The dues are \$5.00 per year,
this is really the best bargain
around. The dues money is used
for many worthwhile projects of
the Society, up-keep of museum,
mailing of this epistle, re-
freshments (when & if), etc.
We, the Society, do hope you
will continue to be a faithful
member, thank you.

* * * * *

"HORSE AND BUGGY DAYS"

Somebody said that the "horse and buggy" days of America were just relics like Indian arrow heads and gold money. I contend they had virtues. The horse and buggy may be obsolete but it went places.

Ask anybody who was a boy in the gay nineties about his rides and romances and get his point of view. Side-bar buggies and handsome colts have helped make grandchildren of most of us.

When we arrived, it was in the spare bed room at home with the doctor's rig out in front. The doctor was paid and the mortgage lifted with old-fashioned dollars. Dad might worry about the stork but Blue Eagles didn't look in the window.

The folks who drove horses were responsible members of the community. The good turn outs represented stability rather than a parade of chattel mortgages.

If some young scion of the family turned the highway into a race track and came home with the horse looking for a breathing spell, he was usually told, with gestures, of the error of his ways.

Uncle Henry might occasionally put away too many drinks election night, but he arrived home safely. He may have lost his hat but all of his bones were together and he hadn't killed anyone on the way. The horse knew when to stop.

Think about all the good clothes that people used to wear in the horse and buggy days. When a couple went out riding they expected to see somebody and to be seen. High hats and fur collars; picture hats and balloon sleeves. Main street was almost a mutual admiration society. Now, you can't tell whether you are passing the chief justice of the United States or Grandma Barnes. You can't tell from the cars and you haven't time to look; if you do you may kill your best friend or someone will tear off your rear bumper.

And the food we used to have, everybody ate those days. No barnyard birth control or fingerprinting to grow potatoes; the family worked nearer home than Washington and they all came home for meals.

In the horse and buggy days, even the young people had time to go places without committing suicide. Time was mingled with judgement. Things were thought out in advance. We didn't have rubber dollars or change the gold standard over night. People even took marriage as a serious obligation. Couples used to go around engaged for five to ten years and get a bank account. The last three or four years the man might grow a beard or a handle-bar mustache. How any girl ever got enthused sitting around necking with a full beard as a playmate is beyond me. It worked, though, and you can check up on the divorce records and find they kept them for better or worse. They had fair-sized families and left them

something besides estate and inheritance taxes. They both struggled along, met their obligation, saved their money and did not have a government guardian or look forward to a pension plan. "God Bless Our Home" mottoes hung in the parlors.

Talk about being a good neighbor; we used to have so many good neighbors we could't find the lawn mower. Mother lent some of them a cow when their last baby came.

Charity was a virtue and not a political enterprise. We even had to go out of the country to find people to receive it. Every church in town had a foreign mission society and all the old clothes went abroad. Aunt Alice had come pictures that the church missionary sent her of some poor heathens all dressed up in our neighborhood clothes. They looked like Love's Labor Lost to me. I was glad when she quit writing to the missionary and married Uncle Joe, who never lived over three squares from the court house and always had ham for breakfast.

The court house. That certainly stands as a monument to the old days. In our state we have ninety two of them just one day's ride apart in a horse and buggy, built for the convenience of those who want a change of venue. We might improve that, but so many are used as political prep schools that it would be against the present progressive thought when post offices are in the publishing business.

Back in the horse and buggy days, almost everyone had his own ideas about political affairs without getting instructions any place. When a man ran for office he was pretty well looked over and his background known. Presidents didn't call in the doctors unless they were sick and government business and all other business seemed to struggle along with just horse sense.

I don't know exactly what horse sense may mean, but it was a common expression in the horse and buggy days. It seems to have disappeared along with the horse and buggy to a large extent.

The next time you take in a fair or a horse show look the horse over. They seem to be rather an intelligent and attractive group. Keep the picture in your mind when you go to a political meeting or a gathering of a social reform society. You will bet on the horses every time when it comes to comparing real intelligence, or I miss my guess. I am considering groups and not individuals. I don't want to insult any one, not even a horse.

When you drove a horse and buggy you know something about the horse before you got through. You learned from experience. Now, past experiences covering thousands of years have no more value than a political promise. Time and distance are so discounted as to influence the fundamentals of economics, and the alphabet is mixed with horse feed. I am fearful that horse sense died with the horse. If anything is left, it is just the buggy.

Front porch and garden gate visits were part of the horse and buggy days. People and the milk of human kindness in their souls. You didn't hear the rabid talk of class. Wealth was a distinction

however, that this list is far from being complete.

Who knows, or remembers now, that two automobiles were manufactured in Greensburg?

One of these, named the Simplicity, was built by Ira Hollensbe, probably the most remarkable mechanical genius this section of Indiana has ever produced. His car was a success by the standards of half a century ago, but limited financial resources and later in life, his failing sight, defeated Mr. Hollensbe.

The other Greensburg-made car was the Hamiltonian, built by Harry Hamilton with the assistance of Frank McCracken. It, too, a successful product, but only one was built.

Wasn't it Dr. Gullefer who used to drive a Stanley Steamer round Greensburg? Anyway, the doctor, whose hearing was defective, thought his engine "sounded mighty sweet." He called on Harry Hillabold to corroborate his judgment (you may recall Roy Kanouse's account of the incident), and Harry agreed that the motor was so quiet that you couldn't hear it, at idling speed, more than four city blocks.

And there was Dr. George Crawford, who drove a Cadillac of the earliest type--this name survives, excuse it. He always carried a sheet of sandpaper to use at frequent intervals on his spark plugs.

Another ancestor of present day cars was the Hup. We had one at the old Times office. It wasn't much bigger than a wheelbarrow and was lacking in several of the modern refinements such as horn, brakes, lights and license plates. It would run, but I don't know how it did. Phil Stapp drove it down South Franklin street one evening in the gloaming and knocked down a citizen, who, for months thereafter, blackmailed him for tobacco and whiskey money.

John Young (circa 1904) drove into Milford one Sunday morning in a magnificent E.M.F. A dozen men and boys, by concerted action, leaped over a fence into Mel Miner's yard and hid behind trees.

Noah Rogers had a little Maxwell that antedated Jack Benny's.

Clyde McKelvey had a huge Nyberg in 1910.

The Late Morgan L. Mires said his Stutz, with careful handling, would make eight miles to the gallon.

The game is, see how many cars, made in this country and no longer produced, you can add to the following list:

Auburn, Cord, Essex, Terraplane, Oakland, Marquette, Rockne, Whippet, Moon, Jordan, Star, McFarland, Cole, La-Salle, Stutz, Marmon, Duesenberg, Maxwell.

Reo, Hupmobile, Durant, Graham-Paige, Lexington, E.M.F., Haynes, Stanley Steamer, Apperson-Jackrabbit, Overland, Premier, Empire, Willys-Knight, Nyberg, Simplicity, Hamiltonian.

OBITUARY

James Kelly was the son of Alexander and Anna Kelly and was born in Monongahela county, West Virginia, December 12, 1831. At the age of thirteen he moved with his father's family to Indiana and settled in what is now the village of Waynesburg. He was married to Ruth Tarkington, February 14, 1856. From this union were born 5 children 4 of whom survive. These together with three devoted grand-children, one brother the only survivor of a family of eight, and a faithful wife were gathered at his bedside and ministered to his every want. He died Sunday February 24, 1901, aged 69 yr. 2 mo. 12 days.

To nearly every household in this community the death of James Kelly comes in the nature of a personal bereavement. He was an ideal specimen of that stalwart manhood, that rugged honesty, that inflexible courage.

Above and beyond everything else James Kelly was an honest man and in his entire make up there was not a penny-weight of dissembling nor deceit. In his intercourse with his neighbors and around his own fireside he was conscientious and firm but kind and telerant. For over thirty years he was an enthusiastic and consistent Free Mason and tried as hard as any man living to circumscribe his daily walk and conversation by the compass and square of that ancient and honorable fraternity. He was several times honored by being elected Worshipful Master of Milford and Alert lodges.

Mr. Kelly was not a member of any church but was a firm believer in the doctrines of universal salvation and during all his long and exhausting illness he never wavered in his belief in the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. While uncompromising in his religious and political views, he allowed other people the fullest latitude and never by word or deed interfered with the religious convictions of any member of his own family. That he had faults in common with all other mortals cannot be denied, but if the rest of us can attain his standard of honesty and morality we may congratulate ourselves that our lives have not been in vain and that the world has been made better by our brief sojourn in it.

The funeral was in charge of Alert Lodge F. & A.M. and the oration was delivered by H.B. Sherman, who paid a high tribute to the character of the deceased. Interment at the Asbury cemetery Feb. 26, 1901.

Note: He was George Kellys' grand-father. My daughter's great-grand-father. Submitted by: Zue Kelly Mitchell

St. Paul Letter
St. Paul, Ind., Feb. 10, 1873

Ed. Standard; - As some of the people are wondering what has become of St. Paul we think it proper to inform them that it still lives and is every day improving in size and morals. It is a consolation to get away from Cincinnati and its coal smoke and come here to the region of pure air and clear skies. This a

beautiful little city of about 1500 inhabitants, situated on the I.C. & L. Railroad 37 miles east of Indianapolis and 80 miles of Cincinnati. Is surrounded by a good country and contains business houses as follows: 2 drug stores, 8 dry good stores, 7 grocery stores, 2 meat markets, 1 hardware store, 2 boot and shoe stores, 2 bakeries, 3 restaurants, 2 millinery stores, 3 grain and commission houses, 2 carriage and wagon shops, 4 black-smith shops, 1 tinshop, 3 lawyers, 3 clergymen, 5 physicians, 1 broker, 2 saw mills, 3 flouring mills, 1 woolen mill, and the saloons - we have not counted. The I.C. & L. Railroad depot is under the charge of the gentlemen only agent Mr. W.W. Mallac, J.W. Fugit is acting as express agent, and at the "general delivery" of the post office, can be found the accomodating clerk Lewis Fugit. The graded schools have Prof. Bullard as Principal and Miss McElwee, Miss Keisling, Miss Madison and Miss Paul, as assistants. The School building is a large brick, containing a chapple and six recitation rooms each of them furnished with the necessary apparatus to make them comfortable. The M.E. Church is under the charge of Rev. J.S. Jordan, who by the way is a young preacher but is doing a good work, Father Brayzard has charge of the Catholic Church, and the Reform pulpit is not filled. The stone quarries at this place are said to be the finest in the state and during the season at least 100 car loads of stone are shipped every week. We are well pleased with the appearance of the place, with the people, who are very sociable and kind, and with the excellent hotel accommodation found there. In conclusion we will say that this is one of the liveliest places of its size in the state, and is destined to become a flourishing little city.

Observer

from "Greensburg Standard", Thursday, February 13, 1873.

#

MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00 Payable by January 1st.

Life Membership \$100.00

☐ Renewal ☐ New ☐ Gift ☐ Life

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

IF GIFTS: From _____ Address _____

MEMORIALS

In Memory of _____ Comments _____

SOCIETY'S OFFICERS

President.....Readawn Metz
RR# 8 Box 21, Grbg.
Ph: 663-7121
1st. V. Pres.....John Westhafer
2nd. V. Pres.....Virginia Carney
Rec. Sec.....Lenore Bainbridge
Cor. Sec.....Peg Miller
Treas.....Maurice Keith

DIRECTORS

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Robert Conwell
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EDITOR OF BULLETIN

Van P. Batterton
525 N. Broadway St.
Greensburg, IN. 47240

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Earl Vanderbur
Allan Beall
Marjorie Hunter
John Oliger
Morgan Miers

MUSEUM CURATOR

Jackie Mendenhall
663-8277

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Lee Lauderdale
663-2769

SOCIETY'S AGENT

William H. Robbins

COUNTY HISTORIAN

Dale Myers
663-4370

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
DECATUR COUNTY, INC.
P.O. BOX 163
GREENSBURG, INDIANA 47240

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518 N. East
Greensburg, IN 47240

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Spring Issue #125

Greensburg, Indiana

May 1991

OCCASION: Spring Meeting

PLACE: Court Room of the
Historic Decatur County
Courthouse.

DATE: Friday, May 3, 1991 at
7:30 P.M.

PROGRAM: Showing of the unusual
movie film produced during the
Greensburg Centennial 1959. This
film was made by a young local man,
Fred Craig. He has since become
quite successful in the animated
movie business. This is one of his
first ventures in movie production,
quite well done. Pat Smith will
act as narrator, I believe.

Genealogical Query-Wish to contact
decendents of James Dunn, Born
Virginia 1791 and died Decatur Co.
1875; and his wife Elizabeth (Sweeney)
b. 1788 and D. Decatur Co. Jan. 1889.
They settled Decatur Co. about 1820.
They had a large acreage around
Burney. Both are buried in Swinney
grave yard. Bill Bentley, 311 N.
Grant, Chanute, KS. 66720.

* * * * *

Art Calendars with scenes of Decatur
County drawn in pen & ink by the
Community Artists are for sale at
half price at the artist's hangout
on N. Broadway. These are very well
done and would make fine keepsakes
for those interested in Decatur Co.

#

Welcome New Members-

Mr. & Mrs. Toni Owens

Museum Artifacts donated by:

Madeline Patterson

Mrs. Elmer Owens

Calvin Davis

Anna Paul Lowe

+ + + + + + + + + + +

Fair Booth- The Society officers have decided to have a booth at
the county fair cuming up in July. This will be to publicize
Decatur Co. history & encourage any interested people to join the
organization and take part.

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING was held
Janu. 21st at the Presbyterian
Church with a rather slim crowd
in attendance. This was the
31st. such meeting which is a
pretty good record for the
society. A fine meal was put
together by the ladies of the
church, Jean Hostetler, an
officer gave an interesting
program about the changing
Roadside Architecture. The
following officers were elected
at a short business meeting:

President: Readawn Metz

1st. Vice: John Westhafer

2nd. Vice: Virginia Carney

Recording Sec.: Lenore Bainbridge

Membership Sec.: Peg Miller

Treasurer: Maurice Keith

Directors: Diana Swegman

John Parker

Museum Trustees: Jackie Mendenhall

Earl Vanderbur

The Society wishes to thank
out-going president Bill Hunter
for his fine job as the leader
of the organization during the
past two years. A membership
drive was suggested. It might
be well if every member would
encourage someone new to join
up. An interesting meeting
for all.

* * * * *

DUES FOR 1991 are due and pay-
able, just send \$5.00 to :
Historical Society of Decatur
Co., P.O. Box 163, Greensburg,
IN. 47240 Peg Miller will be
delighted. Thank you.

#

For Sale - Decatur County
History Books, 1915 Edition
and 1984 Edition. Something
every family should have.
Contact Maddux Auction Barn
for prices.

+ + + + + + + + + + +

CORN IS KING

by: John E. Parker

The pioneer farmers first task after he acquired his land was not to crop but to chop. Trees were an obstacle that had to be removed. Small trees he could chop down with an ax, but the larger trees were often girdled by removing the bark the whole way around, causing them to die and later they could be burned or left to fall.

Once cleared, the land had to be broken usually by a plow and the clumps and clods broken up with a harrow then it was ready to plant.

The first crop planted was invariable corn. Corn was the base of pioneer agriculture, as it was for the Indians and it would remain for generations of Decatur County farmers down to the present. Corn grew easily in the soil and climate, even when planted among trees and stumps. It produced double the food per acre of any other grain and quickly became the staple item in the diet of humans and animals. Pioneer women pounded the grated corn into meal, which they boiled to make mush and bake to make johnny cake and corn pone. With the outer shell removed, they made the grain into hominy for boiling or frying. Corn was also the basis for whiskey and whether in liquid or solid form, corn was usually on the table whenever the family sat down to a meal.

The corn not consumed by the family, was fed to the livestock. Soon they acquired a milk cow and chickens. But most important, they raised hogs, though modern pig farmers would hardly recognize the pioneer variety. Commonly known as razorbacks, land-sharks, elm peeler, alligator, landpike and prairie rooters. They were long legged and wiry and fleet afoot, able to protect themselves and to forage for their own food in the woods. A few weeks prior to slaughter, the farmer penned them up to fatten on corn.

As the farmer cleared the planted corn, a grist mill usually appeared on a nearby stream. The corn was ground into corn meal or flour. A portion of the grain usually one-sixth, went to the miller as his toll, the remainder belonged to the farmer.

In the early 1900's farmers began to mechanize with seed drills, plows and cultivators. Crop rotation, fertilizers, and new skills and knowledge were being learned. After World War I the most important machine to the farmer was the tractor and the development of new machinery to plant and harvest.

Many of the corn growers of Decatur County had there own favorite varieties of corn. Some favored the Johnson County White, a large ear corn for the starch mills, George Hogg of Forrest Hill planted a corn named the Mortgage Lifter. Charlie Logan, a neighbor liked the Bloody Butcher, a blood red corn. A crib of this corn was beautiful. William Jackson, west of

Greensburg raised the Jackson Cattle Corn that had an extra large cob that he chopped for his cattle. We used the Reids Yellow Dent, which was a great favorite of most farmers. It was easy to shuck by hand but after a heavy rain or windstorm it would fall down.

Around 1930 George Short Claimed to have over one hundred bushel yield and he named his farm the 100 Bushel Corn Farm and had that name painted on the front of his barn.

The most dramatic increase in productive corn was the hybrid corn seed, introduced in 1937, it quickly showed great superiority in yields and in resistance to disease and insects. It wasn't long before most farmers were planting it.

The most prominate pioneer in the development of seed corn in Decatur County was Arthur Stewart. For forty years he was an exhibitor and two international awards climaxed his career. In 1952 his ten ears sample of hybrid seed corn won him the title of corn king of the International Hay and Grain Show at Chicago, and in 1957 he won the world corn title at the Royal Canadian Winter Fair at Toronto, Canada.

Stewarts Seeds, that Arthur and his sons ran, is now one of the largest seed corn producers in Southeastern Indiana.

We have come a long way in the production of corn since the Indians taught the pioneer farmer to plant three grains of corn and one fish in a hill. Decatur County contributed to the fact that Indiana is one of the three largest corn producing states in the nation. In Decatur County, corn is number one and still King.

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MEMORIES OF ST. OMER RECALLED
By a former Adams TWP. man.

Go back more than sixty years -- back to the days when the Michigan road was lost in a fog of dust in summer and was a ribbon of mud in the spring. Follow it west from Greensburg in one of those forgotten days, past the old toll gate near the junction with the Vandalia road. Past the Tarkington farm at the right, then on toward the setting sun up the gradual slope, past the early mansion of Doss Pleak, standing on the highest elevation in the county. Thence down the incline to the Stewart farm where the pike ended and the mud began. Thence around the bend half circling the pld graveyard, with the leaning tombstones covered with gray green moss, over the old wooden bridge spanning Clifty.

On toward the west, past the Cap Walker farm, past the tall brick house where the Hill family once lived and where later, Dr. Webb dispensed quinine and advice, Past the Dan Boyer ingaloo and the pretentious home of old Billy Robinson, nestled among the cedars, across what was called the second bottom of Big Flat, down a rocky hill to the first bottom, then up the grade and into

the portals of the old covered bridge where the "hants" were supposed to make their home. Then up a rocky hill, along green fields, when, as if from some mirage, some optical illusion, straggling rows of houses stood guard on each side of the road. This was St. Omer--a town so infernally tough that even Moscow, when the name was mentioned, grew green with envy.

Years before, when the Big Four railroad was surveyed, St. Omer was charted on the line. Its inhabitants envisioned a day when the steam engine would chug, chug among its factories, the church steeples displace the trees and the school bells outsing the frogs. But alas. A quarrel sprang up over the right of way and the railroad grade never reached St. Omer. It stopped with the building of one lone pier for the bridge which was to cross Flat Rock, - - - built a new grade farther south and the engine whistled through St. Paul. St. Omer did not exactly die, but it developed a serious case of "sleeping sickness." I passed through the old town eleven years ago, after nearly half a century of absence. I parked my car among the rag weeds along the side of the road. I looked around. I went into a store whose walls had witnessed a tragedy of the long ago. As I looked, it did not seem possible that so many years had been scratched from the mural of time. The old counters appeared much the same. The shelves were laden with the same kind of merchandise. The sugar barrel and the bin of dried prunes were still there. About the only change that seemed strange was the proprietor. I told him something of the history of the store and all the interest he seemed to take was to remark, "Yes, I've hearn about it." I told him about the feud between a St. Omer man and another man of the town. He was standing at the grocery counter across the rear end of the store one night, when the other man came in the front door. How he picked up one of those old cast iron weights that went with the grocery scales and started for him. How he warned him not to come another step and when he ignored the warning, fell dead, a bullet in his heart. I pointed out the spot where he fell. I happened to be in St. Omer at the time and the scene was so vivid in my mind that I thought I was being very dramatic but this new brand of Hoosier simply yawned and remarked, "I've hearn about it." It takes more than a murder to excite a Hoosier. It takes a dog fight.

These men were both products of the reckless days that followed the Civil war and the best that can be said of them is that they were not kidnapers. I backed my car out of the rag weeds before hay fever caught me, and started east over the old road. It had changed its course. I was disappointed. I wanted to go through that old covered bridge and listen to the "banshees" wailing in the rafters. Instead it led me off to the right and into a steel bridge spanning the creek. I stopped my car on the bridge. Below the waters of Big Flat were murmuring over the smooth stone bottom and over the cliff on one side the honeysuckle vines were reaching for the waters below, while on the other side the road stole away through the trees over the old abandoned railroad grade that at one time was St. Omer's dream.

St. Omer, like Old Middletown, may pass away and future generations may sneeze and wipe their eyes from the rag weed's lowly dust, St. Paul may glory at its eclipse, but on its tomb, if that should come, someone who recalls will place a flowering urn of memories to mark the spot and to honor a past that should be preserved. If it survives, those who call it home, will walk upon Decatur's most historic ground. L.D. Davidson (Wren).

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OLD PAPER HOLDS IMPORTANT NEWS

Decatur Clarion 90 Years Ago
Tells About Five Escaping
Negro Slaves

A copy of the Decatur Clarion of April 7, 1849, was found in the old William M. Hamilton home at Clarksburg recently. The paper was preserved all these 90 years because it contained a whole page report of the trial of Luther A. Donnell, Mr. Hamilton's father-in-law, on the charge of "aiding and assisting five negro slaves to escape."

The alleged crime was committed at Clarksburg November 1, 1848, when a colored woman known as Caroline and four children ranging in age from 1 to 12 years, belonging to George Ray, of Shelby county, Kentucky, were aided in their journey to freedom. This family had been brought from Madison to the home of Angus C. McCoy, four miles east of Greensburg by night and were taken to Clarksburg and hid in a vacant house partly filled with hay on the farm of the defendant.

They were found there by Woodson and Richard Clark, friends of Ray, and identified by them. However, they were sent on their way to Wayne county by anti-slavery men where they were spirited away to Canada.

The Clarion was edited and published by Orville Thomson, a cousin of Mr. Hamilton, It was a "child" of The Decatur Chronicle founded by John Thomson in 1835. The Clarion existed from 1848 to 1851 when it was combined with The Chronicle which was changed to The Decatur Republic in 1854.

The trial was in the old court house on March 30, 1849. The presiding Judge was George H. Dunn, of Lawrenceburg, and John Hopkins and Samuel Eliss, of Decatur County, associate judges. John S. Scobey and Andrew Davison were for the prosecution of the case, State vs. L.A. Donnell, and John Ryman, of Lawrenceburg, and Joseph Robinson and Philander Hamilton, local attorneys, were the defense counsels.

The owner appeared a day later. Involved in the piloting of fugitives were W.M. Hamilton, Douglas McCoy, John R. Donnell and others. The case was brought under the U.S. fugitive slave law and the case of Pennsylvania vs. Prigg was used by the prosecution to convict. The jury found the defendant guilty and assessed a fine of \$50. An appeal to the supreme court was refused, but later was granted and the decision of the lower court declared void and

unconstitutional by Judge Perkins. Later the case was carried to the federal court in Indianapolis where the defendant was found guilty and assessed a fine of \$1,500.

The jury that heard the case here was composed of William Magnus and Louis R. Jocelyn, of Marion; M. Rutherford and Ben Martin, Sandcreek; William McNabb, H. Lathrop and Harry S. Burk, Washington; James Mandlove, Angus Forbes and Eli Douglas, Clay, and Philip Ballard and David Misner, Adams.

James E. Hamilton and Walter Braden were sureties of the bond of the defendant and Jackson Braden and Angus McCoy, also appeared as bondsmen on a second time.

#

UNUSUAL SALE BILL SUBMITTED

A bill advertising a farm sale in Woodford county, Kentucky, a few days over 90 years ago, was displayed today by Hiram Barricklow, Greensburg man. The text of the bill was first re-printed from the bill by the Uniontown Telegram (Kentucky) and copied by the Ohio County News (Rising Sun, IN)

It follows:

SALE - "Having sold my farm and I am leaving for Oregon Territory by ox team, will offer on March 1, all of my personal property, to wit: "All ox teams except two teams. Buck and Ben and Tom and Jerry; 2 milk cows; 1 gray mare and colt; 1 pair of oxen and yoke; 1 baby yoke; 2 ox carts; 1 iron foot of popular weather moldboard; 1,500 ten-foot fence rails; 1 60-gal soap kettle; 85 sugar troughs, made of white ash timber; 10 gallons of maple syrup; 2 spinning wheels; 30 pounds of mutton tallow; one large loom made by Jerry Wilson; 300 poles; 100 spit hoops; 100 empty barrels; 1 32-gallon barrel of Johnson Miller whiskey, 7 years old; 20 gallons apple brandy; 1 40-gallon still of oak tanned leather; 1 dozen real books; 2 handle hooks; 3 sythes and cradles; 1 dozen wooden pitchforks; one-half interest in tan yard; 1 32-calibre rifle; bullet mold and powder horn; rifle made by Ben Miller; 50 gallons of soft soap; hams bacon and lard; 40 gallons of sorgham molasses; 6 head fox hounds, all soft-mouthed except one.

"At the same time I will sell my six negro slaves--2 men, 65 and 50 years old, 2 boys, 12 and 18 years old; 2 mulatto wenches, 40 and 30 years old. Will sell all together to same party. Will not separate them.

"Terms of sale: Cash in hand, or note to draw 4 percent interest with Bob McConnel as surety.

My home is two miles south of Versailles, Ky., on the McCouns Ferry Pike. Sale begins at 8 o'clock. Plenty to eat and drink.---P.L. Moss."

AGRICULTURAL BOARD.

The new and go-ahead Board of Directors of the Agricultural Society, met on last Saturday, in compliance with a call of the officers and transacted some very important business.

The sale of the old, and purchase of the new grounds was ratified, and the proper instruments of writing made out. The grounds, containing a fraction less than sixteen acres, were sold to E.L. Floyd, of St. Paul. (the buildings being reserved) for \$4,700. The same amount was paid for the new, which was purchased of Mr. R.R. Cobb, and contains twenty acres. The conditions of the purchase are that Mr. Cobbs shall remove all stumps and undergrowth, top the trees in the grove, make a track one half mile in circumference, and thirty feet wide, remove the reserved buildings from the old, and put them up in the new grounds, in a substantial manner, dig a well and enclose the entire ground with a picket fence, seven feet high, interspersed with the proper number of good substantial gates.

The Board also made a Premium List which is more liberal than heretofore,--The largest premium is that offered for the fastest trotting horse, being \$100. The fastest pacing horse \$50, the fastest racking horse \$25. There must be at least three entries in each of these classes, and if there are but three entries, they will go in trios, if more, in pairs, and the premium awarded to the animal making the two best miles in three.

The Board proposed to instil new life into the management of our County Society, and to make the fairs in future more interesting and profitable than they have been for some years past, and they now give notice to farmers, mechanics, and all branches of industry and professions of this determination, and solicit their cooperation in the attainment of this end.

We will visit the grounds from time to time during the progress of the work of putting in order, and we now give Mr. Cobb notice, that we propose to tell the public all about the manner in which he is complying with the contract. GREENSBURG STANDARD June 10, 1869

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1251-1252
Mr. & Mrs. Shel Smith
518 N. East
Greensburg, IN 47240

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Winter Issue #124

Greensburg, Indiana

January 1991

OCCASION: Thirty-First Annual
Dinner Meeting of the
Historical Society of
Decatur County.

PLACE: Greensburg Presbyterian
Church, NE. Corner of
the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Jan.
26, 1991 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: By the ladies of the
church. Dinner is \$6.00
each. Please reserve by
check. Sent it to Maur-
ice Keith, RR#1, Grbg.
The deadline is the
evening of Jan. 23rd.

PROGRAM: To be announced later.

Genealogical Quieries are being
accepted from those interested.
They will be published as soon as
possible.

* * *

GREENSBURG STANDARD 2/17/1890

Several persons have expressed their approval of the suggestions we made to our city council last week, touching the release from municipal taxation of manufacturing houses working as many as 50 hands. It has been suggested that such an ordinance be passed, and in addition the council should be appointed a committee to prepare a circular setting forth the advantages our city & county offers to capitalist desiring to invest their means in any manufacturing branch of trade, and to seek out men who are willing to avail themselves of these advantages. We understand there is a gentleman at Hamilton, Ohio who might be prevailed upon to invest his money here if liberal inducements are present. Nothing new under the sun. (editor)

FALL MEETING was held Nov. 11 at the Presbyterian Church with 27 members and guests. Those present were well entertained by Emily Shireman. She gave a fine program on dolls, which is her speciality. The Society wishes to thank her for her time and trouble, it was a pleasant afternoon. A short business meeting was also held. President Hunter was in charge of the proceedings.

* * *

NEW MEMBERS

Jack McDaniel - Shelbyville
Emerson C. Miers
Mrs. Robert (Lenore) Bainbridge,
Life Member
Mrs. Donald E. (Margaret) Herbert,
Life Member
Mrs. Richard Lee (Jane) Herbert,
Life Member
Mrs. Henry (Helen) Stille,
Life Member

MEMORIALS

In memory of Charles S. Cox, Sr.,
Margaret M. Smirnoff, and
Dorothea H. Miller, by:
Mrs. Charles . (Eleanor) Cox.

PRESERVING NEWSPRINT

Yellow & crumbling newspaper clippings can be preserved using this technique suggested by the National Archives and reported in a recent edition of "Tree Climber" Mix 2 teaspoons of magnesium carbonate and a quart of club soda in a large plastic dish. Sandwich the clippings between 2 pieces of screen or Pellon (sold in fabric stores) and soak for 30 minutes. Mop excess water with blotting paper and allow to dry overnight on more blotting paper. Then store clippings in a well-sealed flat plastic bag. They should last forever.

SUBMITTED BY: Pat Smith

I've learned some things about the Star Barn since I wrote the article that was in the last Bulletin. I didn't know that the barn had its own veterinarian, I didn't know the barn had its own lab and at the time of writing the article I didn't know who all of the owners had been. Well, I've learned these things now - thanks to Dr. James Mendenhall.

This then is a continuation of the story about the Star Barn that was in the last Bulletin. Dr. James Mendenhall has been the veterinarian at the Barn for the past 40 years. I talked with Jim about his years at the barn. "My first memory of the sale barn was in 1933." he said. "I was given a small gilt that I raised. I had her bred and when she had seven pigs I sold her and the pigs at the barn. I don't remember how much but maybe around \$25.

"In 1940 I worked as an office boy for Dr's Dyar and L.A. Wood. Ike White and I held the pigs for them to vaccinate for hog cholera."

(After Jim received his D.V.M. from Ohio State he served in the Army Specialized Training Program and later worked for the U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Adm. In 1946 he began practicing veterinary medicine in Greensburg. In 1950 he became the Star Barn Vet.)

"About 1950 all breeding cattle had to be bled and tested brucellosis at the Sale Barn Laboratory. Dyer Wood turned this over to me and kept the pig vaccination, done by David Ardery, who worked for Dyar until Dyar died in 1958. Dr. Vaughn Morrison did this while David Ardery was recovering from an auto accident.

"From the late 1950's I did the cattle testing, hog vaccination and for a few years also bled the horses for Equine Infectious Anemia, except for one year. Now feeder cattle are treated for internal and external parasites, vaccinated for Red Nose, Viris Dirharea and given growth implants.

(The lab at the barn was upstairs when the cattle and animals were sold on the second floor and was moved downstairs when they no longer took them upstairs to sell them. Jim was able to take the blood samples and test them on the spot.)

I asked Jim, "How did they ever get all of those animals up there?" He answered that they were taken up the ramps. Of course, then I remembered the ramps that I've seen going in the barns in the county. I had visulized great elevators taking the cattle up.

"In the history of the owners (that follows) you'll see that Joe Strasburger sold the barn to Charles Young in 1946. When the horse business went bad Charles sold the barn to R.S. Trimbel, from Montgonery Co., KY, and went into thorobred racing with George Borden as his helper.

"Tiring of that, Charles bought the barn back and teamed with Bill Critzer. They did a fine job with feeder cattle from the West, and feeder pigs from Lexington, KY.

"Charles Young bought Bill Critzer's half in 1966. He owned the farm across the creek from our house (Jack Bruesaugh bought it in '67) There was a barn where pigs were brought in by Bill Critzer, sorted, vaccinated and taken down to the sale barn to sell.

"There are some individuals who have been involved in the barn since 1954 that I'll never forget. They include Charles Young, a great friend, who had some great sayings such as, "I never lied unless I had to," and "Does that (the food) taste good to your mouth?"

"Other unforgettable individuals include: Bill Critzer; Jim Hewitt; Leo Espel; Bob Fee; Mike Marley, auctioneer; Earl Scott; R.N. Trimble; Bob Hatton; John Koopman; Jack Hatton; Don Peters; Bob Cross the present owner and plenty of others."

Jim got the list of all of the Star Barn property owners, since 1821 to 1990 from the present owner, Bob Cross. Here is the list:

March 2, 1821 - Benjamin Walker of Dearmorn Co. purchased from the U.S. Government - 80 acres, signed by James Monroe, President and Josiah Meigs, Commissioner of General Land Office.

Feb. 4, 1824 - Decatur Co. purchased from Walker 40 acres for County seat.

(Between 1824 and 1840 there were several parcels sold by the county and city to several parties.)

1833 and 1840 - Henry H. Talbott purchased and platted what they called "out lots" of which the Sale Barn property includes all or part of out lot 3 through 7.

1840 - sold to James F. Foley

1846 - Foley to Hugh Sidwell

1854 - Ft. Wayne Railroad purchased part of above property

1860 - Railroad sold to Barton W. Wilson

1870 - Wilson sold to Wm. D. Daily who laid out a subdivision.

1882 - Daily sold to Richard J. Braden

1885 - Braden sold to Wm. H. Reed

1887 - Reed sold to Theo. H. Reed of Rush Co.

1891 - Theo. Reed sold to three Scoby women and Sarah Hadley

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"There are some individuals who have been involved in the barn since 1954 that I'll never forget. They include Charles Young, a great friend, who had some great sayings such as, "I never lied unless I had to," and "Does that (the food) taste good to your mouth?"

"Other unforgettable individuals include: Bill Critzer; Jim Hewitt; Leo Espel; Bob Fee; Mike Marley, auctioneer; Earl Scott; R.N. Trimble; Bob Hatton; John Koopman; Jack Hatton; Don Peters; Bob Cross the present owner and plenty of others."

Jim got the list of all of the Star Barn property owners, since 1821 to 1990 from the present owner, Bob Cross. Here is the list:

March 2, 1821 - Benjamin Walker of Dearmorn Co. purchased from the U.S. Government - 80 acres, signed by James Monroe, President and Josiah Meigs, Commissioner of General Land Office.

Feb. 4, 1824 - Decatur Co. purchased from Walker 40 acres for County seat.

(Between 1824 and 1840 there were several parcels sold by the county and city to several parties.)

1833 and 1840 - Henry H. Talbott purchased and platted what they called "out lots" of which the Sale Barn property includes all or part of out lot 3 through 7.

1840 - sold to James F. Foley

1846 - Foley to Hugh Sidwell

1854 - Ft. Wayne Railroad purchased part of above property

1860 - Railroad sold to Barton W. Wilson

1870 - Wilson sold to Wm. D. Daily who laid out a subdivision.

1882 - Daily sold to Richard J. Braden

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"In 1940 I worked as an office boy for Dr's Dyar and L.A. Wood. Ike White and I held the pigs for them to vaccinate for hog cholera."

(After Jim received his D.V.M. from Ohio State he served in the Army Specialized Training Program and later worked for the U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Adm. In 1946 he began practicing veterinary medicine in Greensburg. In 1950 he became the Star Barn Vet.)

"About 1950 all breeding cattle had to be bled and tested brucellosis at the Sale Barn Laboratory. Dyer Wood turned this over to me and kept the pig vaccination, done by David Ardery, who worked for Dyar until Dyar died in 1958. Dr. Vaughn Morrison did this while David Ardery was recovering from an auto accident.

"From the late 1950's I did the cattle testing, hog vaccination and for a few years also bled the horses for Equine Infectious Anemia, except for one year. Now feeder cattle are treated for internal and external parasites, vaccinated for Red Nose, Viris Dirharea and given growth implants.

(The lab at the barn was upstairs when the cattle and animals were sold on the second floor and was moved downstairs when they no longer took them upstairs to sell them. Jim was able to take the blood samples and test them on the spot.)

I asked Jim, "How did they ever get all of those animals up there?" He answered that they were taken up the ramps. Of course, then I remembered the ramps that I've seen going in the barns in the county. I had visulized great elevators taking the cattle up.

"In the history of the owners (that follows) you'll see that Joe Strasburger sold the barn to Charles Young in 1946. When the horse business went bad Charles sold the barn to R.S. Trimbel, from Montgonery Co., KY, and went into thorobred racing with George Borden as his helper.

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Greensburg, Indiana

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In memory of Charles S. Cox, Sr., Margaret M. Smirnoff, and Dorothea H. Miller, by: Mrs. Charles . (Eleanor) Cox.

PRESERVING NEWSPRINT

Yellow & crumbling newspaper clippings can be preserved using this technique suggested by the National Archives and reported in a recent edition of "Tree Climber" Mix 2 teaspoons of magnesium carbonate and a quart of club soda in a large plastic dish. Sandwich the clippings between 2 pieces of screen or Pellon (sold in fabric stores) and soak for 30 minutes. Mop excess water with blotting paper and allow to dry overnight on more blotting paper. Then store clippings in a well-sealed flat plastic bag. They should last forever.

SUBMITTED BY: Pat Smith

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In memory of Charles S. Cox, Sr.,
Margaret M. Smirnoff, and
Dorothea H. Miller, by:
Mrs. Charles . (Eleanor) Cox.

PRESERVING NEWSPRINT

Yellow & crumbling newspaper clippings can be preserved using this technique suggested by the National Archives and reported in a recent edition of "Tree Climber" Mix 2 teaspoons of magnesium carbonate and a quart of club soda in a large plastic dish. Sandwich the clippings between 2 pieces of screen or Pellon (sold in fabric stores) and soak for 30 minutes. Mop excess water with blotting paper and allow to dry overnight on more blotting paper. Then store clippings in a well-sealed flat plastic bag. They should last forever.

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Winter Issue #124

Greensburg, Indiana

January 1991

OCCASION: Thirty-First Annual
Dinner Meeting of the
Historical Society of
Decatur County.

PLACE: Greensburg Presbyterian
Church, NE. Corner of
the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Jan.
26, 1991 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: By the ladies of the
church. Dinner is \$6.00
each. Please reserve by
check. Sent it to Maur-
ice Keith, RR#1, Grbg.
The deadline is the
evening of Jan. 23rd.

PROGRAM: To be announced later.

Genealogical Queries are being
accepted from those interested.
They will be published as soon as
possible.

* * . *

GREENSBURG STANDARD 2/17/1890

Several persons have expressed their approval of the suggestions we made to our city council last week, touching the release from municipal taxation of manufacturing houses working as many as 50 hands. It has been suggested that such an ordinance be passed, and in addition the council should be appointed a committee to prepare a circular setting forth the advantages our city & county offers to capitalist desiring to invest their means in any manufacturing branch of trade, and to seek out men who are willing to avail themselves of these advantages. We understand there is a gentleman at Hamilton, Ohio who might be prevailed upon to invest his money here if liberal inducements are present. Nothing new under the sun. (editor)

FALL MEETING was held Nov. 11 at the Presbyterian Church with 27 members and guests. Those present were well entertained by Emily Shireman. She gave a fine program on dolls, which is her speciality. The Society wishes to thank her for her time and trouble, it was a pleasant afternoon. A short business meeting was also held. President Hunter was in charge of the proceedings.

* * *

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 the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Jan.
 26, 1991 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: By the ladies of the
 church. Dinner is \$6.00
 each. Please reserve by
 check. Sent it to Maur-
 ice Keith, RR#1 , Grbg.
 The deadline is the
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PROGRAM: To be announced later.

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P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

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In Memory of _____ Comments _____

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Van P. Batterton
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William H. Robbins

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Dale Myers
663-4370

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Winter Issue #124

Greensburg, Indiana

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Winter Issue #124

Greensburg, Indiana

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Ray issued a "fugitive slave notice" and posted a \$500 reward for the family's return. Caroline and her children were having breakfast the next morning when they were captured by Woodson Clark, the white former Virginian who founded Clarksburg. He locked the family in a fodder house on his adjacent property for more than 12 hours. When farmer Buford Peyton learned the family was missing he got fellow anti-slavery advocate Luther Donnell to obtain a warrent to search Clark's home. Caroline and her children were rescued from the fodder house the night of Nov. 1 and Donnell helped the family over a fence while carrying young Henry in his arms.

It was an act that resulted in the state charging Donnell with "aiding Negroes to escape."

A Decatur County Circuit Court convicted Donnell in 1848, a verdict the Indiana Supreme Court later overturned. Caroline's former owner subsequently sued Donnell for damages, winning a \$1,500 judgement and court costs.

Despite what he had been through, Dennell was cheered years later by a letter he received.

"Caroline wrote to me expressing her great thankfulness for my assistance," he recalled. "She and her family reached Canada safely."

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P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00

Payable by January 1st.

Life Membership \$100.00

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/THE BULLETIN/

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One afternoon while throwing bundles into the separator, Ted one of my horses, got his tail caught in the cylinder shaft and almost pulled his tail off. I finally got Ted and Molly stopped at the other end of the field after spilling most of my load. I had to get another horse as Ted would not get close to the separator.

Within a week after the last job was done a settlement meeting was held at the home of one of the owners of the rig. I remember paying five cents a bushel in the early 1930's for getting the wheat threshed and extra help was paid 20 cents per 100 bushels. An average yield per acre was 20 bushels. After the settle up was done we had ice cream and cake and everyone was happy to see the end of another successful grain season.

In 1934 we bought the seventh combine to come into Decatur County, an Oliver 12 foot pull type and we did custom work all over the county. The combine was relatively inexpensive and highly efficient, it cut and threshed grain in a single sweep of the field. It eliminated almost all the hard work and most of the laborers. In the early 1940's almost all of the separators were retired ending an era of the threshing ring and an important period of history in Decatur County.

Submitted by: John E. Parker
1989

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INDIANA BLACK HISTORY

by: Lynn Ford

It was a crisp autumn night when a woman finally began the journey she had often dreamed about: She set out to flee the bondage of slavery.

Caroline, the 30 year-old slave of George Ray of Trimble County, KY., had long worried about the potential consequences of an escape.

Her own fate wasn't the only consideration - she had two daughters and two sons. But late on the night of Oct. 31, 1847, she decided a chance for freedom was worth the risk. So Caroline, identified in historical records only by her first name, rounded

up her children and rushed off on an Under-ground Railroad trek that nearly ended in Indiana.

Black and white escorts accompanied them on the journey that took Caroline and her children - Frances, 12, John 7, Amanda 4, and Henry 2, to a southern Decatur County farm. They were later taken by white anti-slavery activists to the Peyton-Speed farm in Greenbriar Settlement near the Decatur-Franklin County line.

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The separator tender kept the machine running smoothly. He could be found standing on top with an oil can, grease gun and adjusting tools to keep the bundles moving through the machine smoothly.

The blowerman labored at the rear of the machine. By manipulating cranks he would attempt to build an even and solid straw pile. Before the rig would arrive we would build a structure out of poles and he would blow the straw on top and would create a cozy wintering place for our stock.

As the automatic weigher ticked off the half-bushels the wheat handlers sacked the grain in two-bushel bags and placed in grain wagons, driven to the farmers grainary and unloaded. If the farmer had enough for his own use the grain was directed into the wagon box and taken to the elevator.

The bundle wagon drivers arranged the sheaves even so the load would not spill when going over rough or hilly ground. He would also pitch the bundles into the separator always the grain head first.

The pitchers one or two for each wagon would pitch the bundles from the shocks onto the wagon using a long handle fork to reach the top of the load.

The waterboy had a horse and spring wagon loaded with several jugs and kegs filled with cool water and was kept busy hauling water to the thirsty crew. It took a crew of around twenty men to work the ring.

To feed this crew the women would start a couple days ahead baking and cooking and extra help was needed to serve and prepare the noon meal. How we would enjoy this feast and eat all we could hold. Then we would lay under the shade trees in the yard, but all too soon the whistle on the engine would call us back to work.

I don't think a threshing season went by without someone getting mad and having a fight or two and someone being thrown

into the slimy horse watering trough. I can't remember of anyone getting hurt. Also there was a lot of fun.

A bundle wagon driver that was afraid of snakes would always find one in his load and would not get back on the wagon until the snake was removed.

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1954 - Trimble to Chas. Young and Wm. Critzer

1966 - Critzer to Charles young

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1967 - Koopman to Jack Hatton

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My gratitude to Dr. James Mendenhall and Bob Cross for the above information. Perhaps Van can talk Jim into writing more about his years as a veterinarian in Decatur County.

THE SAMUELS THRESHING RING

John and Ed Samuels, brothers and their Nephew Bartlow, who were cousins to Martha Samuels of Greensburg, owned and operated a steam engine and separator and threshed our wheat and oats between the years of 1920 and 1934. Our threshing ring consisted of around 15 to 20 farms in the Horace and Forrest Hill community located in Decatur County, Indiana.

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1989

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P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00

Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

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☐ Gift

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Winter Issue #124 Greensburg, Indiana January 1991

OCCASION: Thirty-First Annual
Dinner Meeting of the
Historical Society of
Decatur County.

PLACE: Greensburg Presbyterian
Church, NE. Corner of
the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Jan.
26, 1991 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: By the ladies of the
church. Dinner is \$6.00
each. Please reserve by
check. Sent it to Maurice
Keith, RR#1, Grbg.
The deadline is the
evening of Jan. 23rd.

PROGRAM: To be announced later.

Genealogical Quieries are being
accepted from those interested.
They will be published as soon as
possible.

* * . *

GREENSBURG STANDARD 2/17/1890

Several persons have expressed their approval of the suggestions we made to our city council last week, touching the release from municipal taxation of manufacturing houses working as many as 50 hands. It has been suggested that such an ordinance be passed, and in addition the council should be appointed a committee to prepare a circular setting forth the advantages our city & county offers to capitalist desiring to invest their means in any manufacturing branch of trade, and to seek out men who are willing to avail themselves of these advantages. We understand there is a gentleman at Hamilton, Ohio who might be prevailed upon to invest his money here if liberal inducements are present. Nothing new under the sun. (editor)

FALL MEETING was held Nov. 11 at the Presbyterian Church with 27 members and guests. Those present were well entertained by Emily Shireman. She gave a fine program on dolls, which is her speciality. The Society wishes to thank her for her time and trouble, it was a pleasant afternoon. A short business meeting was also held. President Hunter was in charge of the proceedings.

* * *

NEW MEMBERS

Jack McDaniel - Shelbyville
Emerson C. Miers
Mrs. Robert (Lenore) Bainbridge,
Life Member
Mrs. Donald E. (Margaret) Herbert,
Life Member
Mrs. Richard Lee (Jane) Herbert,
Life Member
Mrs. Henry (Helen) Stille,
Life Member

MEMORIALS

In memory of Charles S. Cox, Sr.,
Margaret M. Smirnoff, and
Dorothea H. Miller, by:
Mrs. Charles . (Eleanor) Cox.

PRESERVING NEWSPRINT

Yellow & crumbling newspaper clippings can be preserved using this technique suggested by the National Archives and reported in a recent edition of "Tree Climber" Mix 2 teaspoons of magnesium carbonate and a quart of club soda in a large plastic dish. Sandwich the clippings between 2 pieces of screen or Pellon (sold in fabric stores) and soak for 30 minutes. Mop excess water with blotting paper and allow to dry overnight on more blotting paper. Then store clippings in a well-sealed flat plastic bag. They should last forever.

SUBMITTED BY: Pat Smith

I've learned some things about the Star Barn since I wrote the article that was in the last Bulletin. I didn't know that the barn had its own veterinarian, I didn't know the barn had its own lab and at the time of writing the article I didn't know who all of the owners had been. Well, I've learned these things now - thanks to Dr. James Mendenhall.

This then is a continuation of the story about the Star Barn that was in the last Bulletin. Dr. James Mendenhall has been the veterinarian at the Barn for the past 40 years. I talked with Jim about his years at the barn. "My first memory of the sale barn was in 1933." he said. "I was given a small gilt that I raised. I had her bred and when she had seven pigs I sold her and the pigs at the barn. I don't remember how much but maybe around \$25.

"In 1940 I worked as an office boy for Dr's Dyar and L.A. Wood. Ike White and I held the pigs for them to vaccinate for hog cholera."

(After Jim received his D.V.M. from Ohio State he served in the Army Specialized Training Program and later worked for the U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Adm. In 1946 he began practicing veterinary medicine in Greensburg. In 1950 he became the Star Barn Vet.)

"About 1950 all breeding cattle had to be bled and tested brucellosis at the Sale Barn Laboratory. Dyer Wood turned this over to me and kept the pig vaccination, done by David Ardery, who worked for Dyar until Dyar died in 1958. Dr. Vaughn Morrison did this while David Ardery was recovering from an auto accident.

"From the late 1950's I did the cattle testing, hog vaccination and for a few years also bled the horses for Equine Infectious Anemia, except for one year. Now feeder cattle are treated for internal and external parasites, vaccinated for Red Nose, Viris Dirharea and given growth implants.

(The lab at the barn was upstairs when the cattle and animals were sold on the second floor and was moved downstairs when they no longer took them upstairs to sell them. Jim was able to take the blood samples and test them on the spot.)

I asked Jim, "How did they ever get all of those animals up there?" He answered that they were taken up the ramps. Of course, then I remembered the ramps that I've seen going in the barns in the county. I had visualized great elevators taking the cattle up.

"In the history of the owners (that follows) you'll see that Joe Strasburger sold the barn to Charles Young in 1946. When the horse business went bad Charles sold the barn to R.S. Trimbel, from Montgonery Co., KY, and went into thorobred racing with George Borden as his helper.

"Tiring of that, Charles bought the barn back and teamed with Bill Critzer. They did a fine job with feeder cattle from the West, and feeder pigs from Lexington, KY.

"Charles Young bought Bill Critzer's half in 1966. He owned the farm across the creek from our house (Jack Bruesaugh bought it in '67) There was a barn where pigs were brought in by Bill Critzer, sorted, vaccinated and taken down to the sale barn to sell.

"There are some individuals who have been involved in the barn since 1954 that I'll never forget. They include Charles Young, a great friend, who had some great sayings such as, "I never lied unless I had to," and "Does that (the food) taste good to your mouth?"

"Other unforgettable individuals include: Bill Critzer; Jim Hewitt; Leo Espel; Bob Fee; Mike Marley, auctioneer; Earl Scott; R.N. Trimble; Bob Hatton; John Koopman; Jack Hatton; Don Peters; Bob Cross the present owner and plenty of others."

Jim got the list of all of the Star Barn property owners, since 1821 to 1990 from the present owner, Bob Cross. Here is the list:

March 2, 1821 - Benjamin Walker of Dearborn Co. purchased from the U.S. Government - 80 acres, signed by James Monroe, President and Josiah Meigs, Commissioner of General Land Office.

Feb. 4, 1824 - Decatur Co. purchased from Walker 40 acres for County seat.

(Between 1824 and 1840 there were several parcels sold by the county and city to several parties.)

1833 and 1840 - Henry H. Talbott purchased and platted what they called "out lots" of which the Sale Barn property includes all or part of out lot 3 through 7.

1840 - sold to James F. Foley

1846 - Foley to Hugh Sidwell

1854 - Ft. Wayne Railroad purchased part of above property

1860 - Railroad sold to Barton W. Wilson

1870 - Wilson sold to Wm. D. Daily who laid out a subdivision.

1882 - Daily sold to Richard J. Braden

1885 - Braden sold to Wm. H. Reed

1887 - Reed sold to Theo. H. Reed of Rush Co.

1891 - Theo. Reed sold to three Scoby women and Sarah Hadley

1896 - Scoby and Hadley sold to George A. Riley

1899 - Riley sold to John S. Wilson
1903 - Part of "out lots" owned by Henry Logan was sold to Joseph F. Strasburger.
1906 - Strasburger sold a parcel to S.U. Pleak
1907 - Strasburger sold a parcel to Johh Wilson
1912 - Pleak sold to Wm. Fleming
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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Spring Issue #125

Greensburg, Indiana

May 1991

OCCASION: Spring Meeting

PLACE: Court Room of the
Historic Decatur County
Courthouse.

DATE: Friday, May 3, 1991 at
7:30 P.M.

PROGRAM: Showing of the unusual
movie film produced during the
Greensburg Centennial 1959. This
film was made by a young local man,
Fred Craig. He has since become
quite successful in the animated
movie business. This is one of his
first ventures in movie production,
quite well done. Pat Smith will
act as narrator, I believe.

Genealogical Query-Wish to contact
decendents of James Dunn, Born
Virginia 1791 and died Decatur Co.
1875, and his wife Elizabeth (Sweeney)
b. 1788 and D. Decatur Co. Jan. 1889.
They settled Decatur Co. about 1820.
They had a large acreage around
Burney. Both are buried in Swinney
grave yard. Bill Bentley, 311 N.
Grant, Chanute, KS. 66720.

* * * * *

Art Calendars with scenes of Decatur
County drawn in pen & ink by the
Community Artists are for sale at
half price at the artist's hangout
on N. Broadway. These are very well
done and would make fine keepsakes
for those interested in Decatur Co.

#

Welcome New Members-

Mr. & Mrs. Toni Owens

Museum Artifacts donated by:

Madeline Patterson
Mrs. Elmer Owens
Calvin Davis
Anna Paul Lowe

+ + + + + + + + + + +

Fair Booth- The Society officers have decided to have a booth at
the county fair cuming up in July. This will be to publicize
Decatur Co. history & encourage any interested people to join the
organization and take part.

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING was held

Janu. 21st at the Presbyterian
Church with a rather slim crowd

in attendance. This was the
31st. such meeting which is a

pretty good record for the
society. A fine meal was put

together by the ladies of the
church, Jean Hostetler, an

officer gave an interesting
program about the changing

Roadside Architecture. The
following officers were elected

at a short business meeting:
President: Readawn Metz

1st. Vice: John Westhafer
2nd. Vice: Virginia Carney

Recording Sec.: Lenore Bainbridge
Membership Sec.: Peg Miller

Treasurer: Maurice Keith
Directors: Diana Swegman

John Parker
Museum Trustees: Jackie Mendenhall

Earl Vanderbur

The Society wishes to thank
out-going president Bill Hunter

for his fine job as the leader
of the organization during the

past two years. A membership
drive was suggested. It might

be well if every member would
encourage someone new to join

up. An interesting meeting
for all.

* * * * *

DUES FOR 1991 are due and pay-
able, just send \$5.00 to :

Historical Society of Decatur
Co., P.O. Box 163, Greensburg,

IN. 47240 Peg Miller will be
delighted. Thank you.

#

For Sale - Decatur County
History Books, 1915 Edition

and 1984 Edition. Something
every family should have.

Contact Maddux Auction Barn
for prices.

CORN IS KING

by: John E. Parker

The pioneer farmers first task after he acquired his land was not to crop but to chop. Trees were an obstacle that had to be removed. Small trees he could chop down with an ax, but the larger trees were often girdled by removing the bark the whole way around, causing them to die and later they could be burned or left to fall.

Once cleared, the land had to be broken usually by a plow and the clumps and clods broken up with a harrow then it was ready to plant.

The first crop planted was invariable corn. Corn was the base of pioneer agriculture, as it was for the Indians and it would remain for generations of Decatur County farmers down to the present. Corn grew easily in the soil and climate, even when planted among trees and stumps. It produced double the food per acre of any other grain and quickly became the staple item in the diet of humans and animals. Pioneer women pounded the grated corn into meal, which they boiled to make mush and bake to make johnny cake and corn pone. With the outer shell removed, they made the grain into hominy for boiling or frying. Corn was also the basis for whiskey and whether in liquid or solid form, corn was usually on the table whenever the family sat down to a meal.

The corn not consumed by the family, was fed to the livestock. Soon they acquired a milk cow and chickens. But most important, they raised hogs, though modern pig farmers would hardly recognize the pioneer variety. Commonly known as razorbacks, land-sharks, elm peeler, alligator, landpike and prairie rooters. They were long legged and wiry and fleet afoot, able to protect themselves and to forage for their own food in the woods. A few weeks prior to slaughter, the farmer penned them up to fatten on corn.

As the farmer cleared the planted corn, a grist mill usually appeared on a nearby stream. The corn was ground into corn meal or flour. A portion of the grain usually one-sixth, went to the miller as his toll, the remainder belonged to the farmer.

In the early 1900's farmers began to mechanize with seed drills, plows and cultivators. Crop rotation, fertilizers, and new skills and knowledge were being learned. After World War I the most important machine to the farmer was the tractor and the development of new machinery to plant and harvest.

Many of the corn growers of Decatur County had there own favorite varieties of corn. Some favored the Johnson County White, a large ear corn for the starch mills, George Hogg of Forrest Hill planted a corn named the Mortgage Lifter. Charlie Logan, a neighbor liked the Bloody Butcher, a blood red corn. A crib of this corn was beautiful. William Jackson, west of

Greensburg raised the Jackson Cattle Corn that had an extra large cob that he chopped for his cattle. We used the Reids Yellow Dent, which was a great favorite of most farmers. It was easy to shuck by hand but after a heavy rain or windstorm it would fall down.

Around 1930 George Short Claimed to have over one hundred bushel yield and he named his farm the 100 Bushel Corn Farm and had that name painted on the front of his barn.

The most dramatic increase in productive corn was the hybrid corn seed, introduced in 1937, it quickly showed great superiority in yields and in resistance to disease and insects. It wasn't long before most farmers were planting it.

The most prominate pioneer in the development of seed corn in Decatur County was Arthur Stewart. For forty years he was an exhibitor and two international awards climaxed his career. In 1952 his ten ears sample of hybrid seed corn won him the title of corn king of the International Hay and Grain Show at Chicago, and in 1957 he won the world corn title at the Royal Canadian Winter Fair at Toronto, Canada.

Stewarts Seeds, that Arthur and his sons ran, is now one of the largest seed corn producers in Southeastern Indiana.

We have come a long way in the production of corn since the Indians taught the pioneer farmer to plant three grains of corn and one fish in a hill. Decatur County contributed to the fact that Indiana is one of the three largest corn producing states in the nation. In Decatur County, corn is number one and still King.

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MEMORIES OF ST. OMER RECALLED
By a former Adams TWP. man.

Go back more than sixty years -- back to the days when the Michigan road was lost in a fog of dust in summer and was a ribbon of mud in the spring. Follow it west from Greensburg in one of those forgotten days, past the old toll gate near the junction with the Vandalia road. Past the Tarkington farm at the right, then on toward the setting sun up the gradual slope, past the early mansion of Doss Pleak, standing on the highest elevation in the county. Thence down the incline to the Stewart farm where the pike ended and the mud began. Thence around the bend half circling the old graveyard, with the leaning tombstones covered with gray green moss, over the old wooden bridge spanning Clifty.

On toward the west, past the Cap Walker farm, past the tall brick house where the Hill family once lived and where later, Dr. Webb dispensed quinine and advice, Past the Dan Boyer ingaloo and the pretentious home of old Billy Robinson, nestled among the cedars, across what was called the second bottom of Big Flat, down a rocky hill to the first bottom, then up the grade and into

the portals of the old covered bridge where the "hants" were supposed to make their home. Then up a rocky hill, along green fields, when, as if from some mirage, some optical illusion, straggling rows of houses stood guard on each side of the road. This was St. Omer--a town so infernally tough that even Moscow, when the name was mentioned, grew green with envy.

Years before, when the Big Four railroad was surveyed, St. Omer was charted on the line. Its inhabitants envisioned a day when the steam engine would chug, chug among its factories, the church steeples displace the trees and the school bells outsing the frogs. But alas. A quarrel sprang up over the right of way and the railroad grade never reached St. Omer. It stopped with the building of one lone pier for the bridge which was to cross Flat Rock, - - - built a new grade farther south and the engine whistled through St. Paul. St. Omer did not exactly die, but it developed a serious case of "sleeping sickness." I passed through the old town eleven years ago, after nearly half a century of absence. I parked my car among the rag weeds along the side of the road. I looked around. I went into a store whose walls had witnessed a tragedy of the long ago. As I looked, it did not seem possible that so many years had been scratched from the mural of time. The old counters appeared much the same. The shelves were laden with the same kind of merchandise. The sugar barrel and the bin of dried prunes were still there. About the only change that seemed strange was the proprietor. I told him something of the history of the store and all the interest he seemed to take was to remark, "Yes, I've hearn about it." I told him about the feud between a St. Omer man and another man of the town. He was standing at the grocery counter across the rear end of the store one night, when the other man came in the front door. How he picked up one of those old cast iron weights that went with the grocery scales and started for him. How he warned him not to come another step and when he ignored the warning, fell dead, a bullet in his heart. I pointed out the spot where he fell. I happened to be in St. Omer at the time and the scene was so vivid in my mind that I thought I was being very dramatic but this new brand of Hoosier simply yawned and remarked, "I've hearn about it." It takes more than a murder to excite a Hoosier. It takes a dog fight.

These men were both products of the reckless days that followed the Civil war and the best that can be said of them is that they were not kidnapers. I backed by car out of the rag weeds before hay fever caught me, and started east over the old road. It had changed its course. I was disappointed. I wanted to go through that old covered bridge and listen to the "banshees" wailing in the rafters. Instead it led me off to the right and into a steel bridge spanning the creek. I stopped my car on the bridge. Below the waters of Big Flat were murmuring over the smooth stone bottom and over the cliff on one side the honeysuckle vines were reaching for the waters below, while on the other side the road stole away through the trees over the old abandoned railroad grade that at one time was St. Omer's dream.

St. Omer, like Old Middletown, may pass away and future generations may sneeze and wipe their eyes from the rag weed's lowly dust, St. Paul may glory at its eclipse, but on its tomb, if that should come, someone who recalls will place a flowering urn of memories to mark the spot and to honor a past that should be preserved. If it survives, those who call it home, will walk upon Decatur's most historic ground. L.D. Davidson (Wren).

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OLD PAPER HOLDS IMPORTANT NEWS

Decatur Clarion 90 Years Ago Tells About Five Escaping Negro Slaves

A copy of the Decatur Clarion of April 7, 1849, was found in the old William M. Hamilton home at Clarksburg recently. The paper was preserved all these 90 years because it contained a whole page report of the trial of Luther A. Donnell, Mr. Hamilton's father-in-law, on the charge of "aiding and assisting five negro slaves to escape."

The alleged crime was committed at Clarksburg November 1, 1848, when a colored woman known as Caroline and four children ranging in age from 1 to 12 years, belonging to George Ray, of Shelby county, Kentucky, were aided in their journey to freedom. This family had been brought from Madison to the home of Angus C. McCoy, four miles east of Greensburg by night and were taken to Clarksburg and hid in a vacant house partly filled with hay on the farm of the defendant.

They were found there by Woodson and Richard Clark, friends of Ray, and identified by them. However, they were sent on their way to Wayne county by anti-slavery men where they were spirited away to Canada.

The Clarion was edited and published by Orville Thomson, a cousin of Mr. Hamilton, It was a "child" of The Decatur Chronicle founded by John Thomson in 1835. The Clarion existed from 1848 to 1851 when it was combined with The Chronicle which was changed to The Decatur Republic in 1854.

The trial was in the old court house on March 30, 1849. The presiding Judge was George H. Dunn, of Lawrenceburg, and John Hopkins and Samuel Eliss, of Decatur County, associate judges. John S. Scobey and Andrew Davison were for the prosecution of the case, State vs. L.A. Donnell, and John Ryman, of Lawrenceburg, and Joseph Robinson and Philander Hamilton, local attorneys, were the defense counsels.

The owner appeared a day later. Involved in the piloting of fugitives were W.M. Hamilton, Douglas McCoy, John R. Donnell and others. The case was brought under the U.S. fugitive slave law and the case of Pennsylvania vs. Prigg was used by the prosecution to convict. The jury found the defendant guilty and assessed a fine of \$50. An appeal to the supreme court was refused, but later was granted and the decision of the lower court declared void and

unconstitutional by Judge Perkins. Later the case was carried to the federal court in Indianapolis where the defendant was found guilty and assessed a fine of \$1,500.

The jury that heard the case here was composed of William Magnus and Louis R. Jocelyn, of Marion; M. Rutherford and Ben Martin, Sandcreek; William McNabb, H. Lathrop and Harry S. Burk, Washington; James Mandlove, Angus Forbes and Eli Douglas, Clay, and Philip Ballard and David Misner, Adams.

James E. Hamilton and Walter Braden were sureties of the bond of the defendant and Jackson Braden and Angus McCoy, also appeared as bondsmen on a second time.

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UNUSUAL SALE BILL SUBMITTED

A bill advertising a farm sale in Woodford county, Kentucky, a few days over 90 years ago, was displayed today by Hiram Barricklow, Greensburg man. The text of the bill was first reprinted from the bill by the Uniontown Telegram (Kentucky) and copied by the Ohio County News (Rising Sun, IN)

It follows:

SALE - "Having sold my farm and I am leaving for Oregon Territory by ox team, will offer on March 1, all of my personal property, to wit: "All ox teams except two teams. Buck and Ben and Tom and Jerry; 2 milk cows; 1 gray mare and colt; 1 pair of oxen and yoke; 1 baby yoke; 2 ox carts; 1 iron foot of popular weather moldboard; 1,500 ten-foot fence rails; 1 60-gal soap kettle; 85 sugar troughs, made of white ash timber; 10 gallons of maple syrup; 2 spinning wheels; 30 pounds of mutton tallow; one large loom made by Jerry Wilson; 300 poles; 100 spit hoops; 100 empty barrels; 1 32-gallon barrel of Johnson Miller whiskey, 7 years old; 20 gallons apple brandy; 1 40-gallon still of oak tanned leather; 1 dozen real books; 2 handle hooks; 3 sythes and cradles; 1 dozen wooden pitchforks; one-half interest in tan yard; 1 32-calibre rifle; bullet mold and powder horn; rifle made by Ben Miller; 50 gallons of soft soap; hams bacon and lard; 40 gallons of sorgham molasses; 6 head fox hounds, all soft-mouthed except one.

"At the same time I will sell my six negro slaves--2 men, 65 and 50 years old, 2 boys, 12 and 18 years old; 2 mulatto wenches, 40 and 30 years old. Will sell all together to same party. Will not separate them.

"Terms of sale: Cash in hand, or note to draw 4 percent interest with Bob McConnel as surety.

My home is two miles south of Versailles, Ky., on the McCouns Ferry Pike. Sale begins at 8 o'clock. Plenty to eat and drink.----P.L. Moss."

AGRICULTURAL BOARD.

The new and go-ahead Board of Directors of the Agricultural Society, met on last Saturday, in compliance with a call of the officers and transacted some very important business.

The sale of the old, and purchase of the new grounds was ratified, and the proper instruments of writing made out. The grounds, containing a fraction less than sixteen acres, were sold to E.L. Floyd, of St. Paul. (the buildings being reserved) for \$4,700. The same amount was paid for the new, which was purchased of Mr. R.R. Cobb, and contains twenty acres. The conditions of the purchase are that Mr. Cobbs shall remove all stumps and undergrowth, top the trees in the grove, make a track one half mile in circumference, and thirty feet wide, remove the reserved buildings from the old, and put them up in the new grounds, in a substantial manner, dig a well and enclose the entire ground with a picket fence, seven feet high, interspersed with the proper number of good substantial gates.

The Board also made a Premium List which is more liberal than heretofore,--The largest premium is that offered for the fastest trotting horse, being \$100. The fastest pacing horse \$50, the fastest racking horse \$25. There must be at least three entries in each of these classes, and if there are but three entries, they will go in trios, if more, in pairs, and the premium awarded to the animal making the two best miles in three.

The Board proposed to instil new life into the management of our County Society, and to make the fairs in future more interesting and profitable than they have been for some years past, and they now give notice to farmers, mechanics, and all branches of industry and professions of this determination, and solicit their cooperation in the attainment of this end.

We will visit the grounds from time to time during the progress of the work of putting in order, and we now give Mr. Cobb notice, that we propose to tell the public all about the manner in which he is complying with the contract. GREENSBURG STANDARD June 10, 1869

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MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00
Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

☐ Renewal ☐ New

☐ Gift ☐ Life

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In Memory of _____ Comments _____

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